



Women's Health Awareness Month

Resource Overview

The Military Health System (MHS) recognizes that women's health is an important part of the overall wellness of the defense community and, in October, focuses on addressing and providing information on women's health concerns. While many health issues are the same for male and female service members, women may be affected differently than men. The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center's (NMCPHC) Health Promotion and Wellness (HPW) Department provides tools and resources female service members can use to keep fit for service and improve overall health. The resources highlighted below include guidance on preventing health issues common to women and offer tips for maintaining good health.



Reproductive and Sexual Health

One of three Navy enlisted women who had an unplanned pregnancy was using birth control when the pregnancy occurred and most of these women were using birth control pills and/or male condoms. Birth control pills can be very reliable, but are, in practice, the most failure-prone hormonal method of birth control because they must be taken consistently every day. Birth control pill-users should:

- Take your pill at the same time every day
- Mark your calendar to be sure to have your refills on time
- Carry your pills wherever you go
- If you miss a pill - make it up
- If you miss two pills - back it up with another form of birth control for the rest of that cycle and call your doctor for advice because there are different recommendations for different pills
- Consider switching to a more reliable method, like the hormonal implant or an intrauterine device (IUD)

Click [here](#) to learn more about birth control pills and visit HPW's [Reproductive and Sexual Health](#) page for more information on contraception and family planning.



Tobacco Free Living

By now, you have probably heard the news – tobacco use is bad for your health. Smoking causes a variety of cancers and increases your risk of lung and heart disease, and stroke.¹ What many do not realize is that women who smoke face additional health risks. Women who smoke are more likely than nonsmokers to experience¹:

- Decreased bone density
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Cataracts
- Ulcers
- Increased healing time
- Depression
- Menstrual problems
- Menopause at an earlier age, and with more severe symptoms
- Difficulty becoming pregnant

Visit HPW's [Tobacco Free Living](#) page for information, tools, and support to help you quit.





Healthy Eating

Did you know that heart disease is the number one killer of women? The good news is you can keep your heart healthy through a nutritious diet that is low in saturated fats and salt, moderate to vigorous physical activity most days of the week, and maintaining a healthy weight. When you eat nutrient-dense foods (whole grains, lean protein, fruits, vegetables, and low fat dairy products), it helps maintain your health and reduce your risk of developing chronic disease.

Visit HPW's [Healthy Eating](#) page for resources on general nutrition, how to create a healthy eating environment, and how healthy eating can prevent chronic disease. Also, listen to a recording of our "Three Powerful Ingredients to a Healthy Heart" [webinar](#) for tips on heart healthy food choices.



Active Living

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that all adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week with two to three days of resistance training mixed in². Research shows that physical activity can reduce your risk of³:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- Unhealthy cholesterol levels
- Type 2 diabetes
- Metabolic syndrome
- Colon cancer
- Breast cancer
- Falls
- Depression

Click [here](#) to learn about the Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling System (NOFFS) and why it is the perfect solution for staying physically fit in confined spaces. Also, visit HPW's [Active Living](#) page for tips and tools to start a new exercise routine or to refresh your current workout regime.

Follow the [Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center](#) on Facebook! Click [here](#) and "like" our page.

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1. National Cancer Institute. 11 harmful effects of smoking on women's health. <http://women.smokefree.gov/11-harmful-effects-of-smoking-on-women's-health.aspx>. Accessed October 1, 2013.
 2. Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Physical activity (exercise) fact sheet. <http://womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/physical-activity.html>. Accessed October 22, 2013.
 3. Garber C, Blissner B, Deschenes M, et al. Quantity and quality of exercise for developing and maintaining cardiorespiratory, musculoskeletal, and neuromotor fitness in apparently healthy adults: Guidance for prescribing exercise. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*. 2011;43(7):1334-59. http://journals.lww.com/acsm-msse/Fulltext/2011/07000/Quantity_and_Quality_of_Exercise_for_Developing.26.aspx. Accessed October 22, 2013.

